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Cantù has irrefragably established his whole thesis, it seems to us that he has made out a very strong, if not a conclusive case, as concerns the question whether modern Italian is derived from a spoken or from the classical written language of ancient Italy. There is still room for debate whether the popular speech was, as Cantù supposes, a distinct dialect of Latin, related to that tongue only as Bolognese, for example, is allied to Tuscan ; or, as Diez maintains, merely a vulgar corruption of the language written by all, and spoken by the cultivated classes. In all events, the theory of Müller, which is equally applicable to either conclusion, is both sufficient and indispensable as an explanation of Germanic features and Germanic ingredients found in the Romance languages.

- ART. II. — 1. *Die laendliche Verfassung Ruzslands. Ihre Entwicklungen und ihre Feststellung in der Gesetzgebung von 1861.* Von AUGUST FREIHERRN VON HAXTHAUSEN. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus. 1866.
2. *Les Institutions de la Russie depuis les Réformes de l'Empereur Alexandre II.* Par M. I.-H. SCHNITZLER. Paris: V° Berger-Levrault et Fils. 1866.
3. *Sketches of Russian Life before and during the Emancipation of the Serfs.* Edited by HENRY MORLEY, Professor of English Literature in University College, London. London: Chapman and Hall. Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott & Co. 1866.
4. *Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Political and Social Sketches of Russia, Greece, and Syria in 1861-2-3.* By HENRY ARTHUR TILLEY. London: Longman, Green, Roberts, and Green. 1864.

ALMOST unnoticed amid the excitement of our threatening calamities came the report, in March, 1861, that Russia had proclaimed emancipation to the serfs within her borders. At that time no one thought of connecting it with our own experience. Two years later our proclamation had gone forth ; another two years, and it had been ratified by the successful

ending of the war. It is interesting, from higher motives than that of curiosity, to look across the waters and watch the working out of a problem similar to ours under a government so diametrically opposite. We welcome, therefore, the recent work of Haxthausen as an accurate and tolerably full account of the Russian legislation on this subject.*

Russian serfdom differed from American slavery not only in many details, but in the grand features which everywhere distinguished the feudal institution from the modern form of servitude. The essential principle of the latter is absolute and immediate property in the person. In villanage the title to the person grows out of a title to the soil, and the condition arises naturally in that stage of society through which most nations pass, when the weak are glad to acknowledge the dominion of one strong hand in order to claim its protection against the violence of many. The serfs of Europe were not strangers in a land of their masters, nor barbarians transplanted to the midst of refinement. On the contrary, they themselves constituted the nation, and their lords were usually the outlanders. Together the two advanced from darkness to light, and, as time went on, they became virtually one and the same people. So long as feudalism lasted, therefore, there was always that in it which checked the tendency of the serf to become a mere chattel, and which in the end greatly diminished the difficulties of emancipation. A thousand years of such a relation do not so far reduce the human creature to the thing, as the single act of snatching a savage from the shores of Africa on the part of men already civilized. Yet the advantage of this difference is not altogether on one side. Negro slavery is simply a modern growth, that has fastened itself on several nations during the last three centuries. Except in the United States, it has never struck deeply into the body politic, partaking of and affecting its vitality. Even with us it throve only by circumstances that suddenly favored its extension, and, though of wide influence, had ever been regarded as an excrescence. But in Russia, from the very nature and antiquity of its origin, the serf class underlies the whole fabric of society, and is among

* A French translation of these laws appeared in St. Petersburg, and a German translation in Mitau, the capital of Courland, both in 1861.

its primitive and most important elements ; — primitive, since the causes that led to its formation lie ten centuries back in history ; and important, because, at the time of emancipation, the serfs proper numbered over twenty million souls, — one third of the whole population.

In the existence of serfdom there was nothing peculiar ; but why in Russia alone of the countries of Europe did it last to the middle of the nineteenth century ? Because this Eastern empire had belonged for many hundred years to Asiatic rather than to European development. Its geographical position reserved for it a destiny distinct from either, whose peculiarity may not yet for generations be fully recognized. It had nothing to do with Greece or Rome, nothing with the Roman Church, nothing indeed with Christianity till nearly a thousand years after the death of the founder of our religion. No ruins of an ancient culture crumbled on its territory, and no contest was waged there between barbarism and an effete civilization. The circumstances which determined the form and the date of the feudal system in the West were, therefore, mainly wanting here. It had its own subjugations and revolutions ; but, compared with the chaotic conditions under which the rest of Europe acquired its modern features, its history in general has been a slow but uniform development of original, self-contained forces. At the very period when society in France and Germany was shaping itself in the feudal moulds under Charlemagne's successors, Russia is for the first time caught sight of as a definite national organization. When the warriors of the West were rushing from their homes at the call of religion to deliver the Holy City, the wild Russian hordes had but barely accepted the Christian name. The fifteenth century, when the rest of Europe was throbbing with the strong pulses of modern life, found Russia throwing off a Mongol yoke that had been borne for two hundred years. And it was actually not till the genius of Peter went abroad seeking civilization with a kind of brute instinct, that his people took their place in the circle of the European nations. No wonder, then, that when feudalism was known elsewhere rather by its vestiges than its presence, and villanage was either a thing of the past or one whose days were clearly numbered, in Russia, on

the contrary, we see it receiving its earliest legal sanction at the end of the sixteenth, and its full confirmation so late as at the beginning of the eighteenth century. As its rise and growth amid these peculiar circumstances are well worth tracing, we will follow Haxthausen through the short history with which he prefaces his abstract of the emancipation laws. His previous works* have made good his claim to be heard with confidence on Russian subjects, though he is much less concise and explicit than his readers could wish. The topic is certainly one which lies mostly beyond the realm of documents and dates; but allowing for this, the impression remains that in his recent work two or three pieces have been laid together for publication without attention to the jointing.

The type of the Russian national character, we are told with emphasis, is "unity of the family, the commune, the race." Our author attributes this directly to the nomadic origin of the people, and sees in their whole subsequent history the uniform development of the double principle therein involved,—the essential unity of the family and the authority of the patriarch. To the former of these is traced the *commune* system, which pre-eminently distinguishes the Russian social organization from that of Western Europe: the latter is represented in lineal descent by the attributes of the Czar. "Czar and 'mire' † were from the outset, as they are to this day, the objects of the highest, of almost sacred reverence and affection." The characteristic of the nomadic period, and that of gradual settlement which followed, is that everywhere this principle of association prevailed, and nowhere did the farm—the separate, individual location—of the German races come into existence. Large families, a whole kith and kin, occupied a tract of land together, either cultivating it in common and sharing after harvest the crop, or assigning the temporary usufruct of a portion to each member, while the possession remained vested in the whole. Relics of the former practice, which was doubtless the earlier, may still be found, it is said, among the Servian villages; the latter is that which has lasted to this day.

* Especially his *Studien ueber die Innern Zustaeude, das Volksleben und die laendlichen Einrichtungen Russlands*, translated into English, somewhat compressed, by Robert Farie. London: Chapman and Hall. 1856.

† The word for *commune*, "mire," is the same as that which signifies the kosmos.

When the population became more stable, tradition tells us that a number of tribes united in inviting to a common sovereignty a small race of Scandinavian origin, the Russo-Varangians, whose leader, Rurik, established his seat of government in Novgorod about A. D. 862. At this time the Russians make their formal *début* in history. An order of nobility, apparently no more indigenous to Slavic territory than serfdom itself, was the natural and speedy consequence of this adoption of masters. The spirit of rule in that age could assume but one shape in the East as well as in the West, — the general shape of feudalism, however much details might differ. The presence of a warlike, dominant race among a people comparatively quiet implied of necessity grants of land and local chieftainships. After the introduction of Christianity, about A. D. 1000, the Church also received large endowments; and the number of such grants naturally increased during the two centuries when Russia was split up into contending principalities, and during the next two (A. D. 1238 – 1477), when all together lay tributary to the Mongol power. These grants, however, — and it is the important fact of this period, — did not give actual and hereditary property in the soil, much less any property in the inhabitants. The soil of “Holy Russia” still belonged to the nation; but the national patriarch, the *pater populi*, had as such the right of assigning its use. His retinue — the Boiars of later time — constituted a nobility, attached more or less immediately to his person, and received their estates simply as reward for their service. If the service ceased, the reward was supposed to cease.

But in that early, rude stage of society, such a tenure could not possibly exist long without giving the nobles, as a practical result, a strong hold on the peasants’ industry. The captives taken in war, who probably already formed a class of genuine slaves, could furnish but a small part of the services required. The life of battle and conquest would increase the demand and the power of the leaders, and soon supplies must have been collected from the agriculturists for the support of the lord and his host. That a state tax of some kind was imposed by Oleg, Rurik’s successor, we learn from Nestor, a monk of the eleventh century, and the oldest Russian chronicler. Such

a revenue would perhaps go with the grant, or be diverted by the princes to themselves, and its payment would initiate among the people the custom of rendering a return for the land occupied by them, but allotted in fee by their recognized head to another. In some such way the system of rent would gradually arise and prevail. At first rent was paid in natural products, — a mode of payment not yet wholly obsolete. Later, a portion of the land was reserved as exclusively the lord's, and cultivated for him by the peasants.

It is easy to see the tendency of such a relation once thoroughly established between noble and peasant. But two processes were needed to develop full Russian serfdom, — the *ascriptio glebæ* on the part of the people, the hereditary possession of the estate on the part of the proprietor. Six hundred years elapsed from the appearance of Rurik to the reign of Ivan the Great, who threw off the Mongol yoke, and thus secured Russia to modern Europe almost simultaneously with the capture of Constantinople by the Moslems. The period was amply long enough to confirm the tendency. In 1257 a census was taken to serve as a basis in the collection of the tribute paid to the Tartars. Then the inhabitants of the towns and villages were forbidden to leave without special permission, and the custom sprang up of restricting migration to the beginning and end of the agricultural season.* During the time of alien supremacy, while the princes acknowledged no central authority within the country itself, they appear to have asserted with increasing success this control of movement. Each one's resources were evidently in direct proportion to the strength of the population resident in his territory. But when, under the liberator, Ivan III., the Grand Duke of Moscow, the integrity of the empire was restored, or rather was for the first time really attained, these restrictions in a measure fell away. That they had been somewhat firmly established, we infer from hearing of a law by which circulation was allowed, but only at a fixed time, after previous warning, and on payment of an emigration tax. This seems to have proved practically but a small hindrance to the people's restlessness. Perhaps, as the national

* Quarterly Review, No. 225, 1863, Article on "Constitutional Government in Russia."

feeling revived, when the foreign yoke was lifted, the peasants felt a stirring to shake off the bondage which was settling down on them at home ; possibly flight had already become the best refuge from their masters' cruelties. So far did they carry their vagrancy, that some districts were half depopulated, and began to go to waste, while others, offering easier support, were overcrowded with settlers. Especially the small estates suffered by the preference of the peasant to live under the protection of the stronger proprietor. Finally, a ukase of Boris Godunoff, in 1592, ordained that all peasants should *remain attached to the soil on which they were found on St. George's day of that year*. This edict, though it naturally could not take complete effect at once, is regarded by the people as the burial of their liberty, and St. George's day is still cursed in the folk-songs as a day of woe. Boris, who was a usurper, had probably hoped by this measure to secure the nobles to his cause. Years of great anarchy ensued, in which one pretender after another grasped at the crown, and the Poles had wellnigh acquired the ascendancy over Russian destinies which they have since had to yield over their own.

The period of anarchy ended when Michael, the first Czar of the present Romanoff line, was raised to the throne, in 1613. But meanwhile the people had taken advantage of the confusion to circulate more freely than ever, to the great injury of agriculture. A terrible famine in 1601 was the consequence, and it was found expedient to confirm the recent edict by new enactments. In 1597 a fugitive-serf law authorized a land proprietor during five years to reclaim a peasant who had abandoned his estate for another ; but a few years after it was added that he lost the right if he failed in time of need to furnish the dependant with sufficient means of support. The final establishment of the *ascriptio glebæ* is referred by some to a ukase of 1610, by others to one of 1626. But both accounts may be doubted. It is seldom that a law marks either the origin or the full completion of a great social revolution. Usually it is long subsequent to the one, and somewhat anticipates the other. In this case, it is safe to say that the middle of the century, under the influence of increasing order, probably witnessed the general stability of the peasant

class in the condition of serfage. The effect was of course to subject the agriculturists, still nominally free, to the exactions of the land-owner. The latter could now increase his demands and exercise his power almost at pleasure, while the tenant was by law deprived of the only means of escape.

The second process necessary to complete the servitude of the tillers of the soil was not long delayed. From the middle of the fifteenth century, everything had conspired to connect Russia more nearly with the general life of Europe. What influence had previously been exerted upon her from outside had principally come through Byzantine channels. But after the fall of Constantinople, Russia soon felt the force of the strong currents eddying from the West. The nobility had already in part lost its feudal character so far as the claim of the head of the state to their personal service was concerned, and was taking on a modern form in various ranks of civil and military service, when, under Peter the Great, the government began with sudden energy to fashion society anew on German models. Among the Czar's most important measures for developing the resources of the state were two which finally consummated the establishment of serfdom. Hitherto, the estates had not, in the eye of the law, been the actual and hereditary property of the families in which custom had doubtless transmitted them for several generations from father to son. Peter, who felt strongly the need of a standing army, saw the advantage of consolidating old interests by giving legal sanction to what custom had already virtually produced. He therefore presented to the collective nobility the full and transmissible title to their estates; imposing at the same time the obligation of military service on all the peasants. The two measures concurred in throwing more power into the hands of the master; — the former, perhaps, principally through the moral violence offered to the old national idea; the latter, by the way in which it was carried into execution. The census made no distinction between the nominally free peasants and the actual slaves whose existence has already been mentioned. It was simply reported, so many peasants belong to such a noble's estate. When the levy was made, the demand for the proportionate number of recruits was addressed to the lord

himself, who, charged with the police of his district, could furnish house slave or village peasant as he pleased.

A third innovation of Peter had a precisely similar effect. The payment of a state tax had become an established practice, and under the Mongol supremacy had assumed a new form, that of money instead of produce. At that time it appears to have been partly a poll-tax, partly an impost on the land. In 1678, the amount of this land-due was settled by law for each village; but probably, on account of the extortion and dishonesty practised by the collectors under this system, Peter substituted for it a uniform poll-tax, reckoned at eighty copeks for each male. The whole sum, however, due from a village was assessed, not upon the individuals, but upon the joint commune, and its distribution was again left to the proprietor. In this way, not by a law aimed to produce the effect, but by the general system of the government, all peasants were reduced to one level, and serfage was practically established in Russia. The name itself did not at once appear. Haxthausen speaks doubtingly of an edict of 1700, which is said to recognize the fact, but continues: "Much later laws first name them [the peasants] serfs, and attempt to regulate their condition. Among the peasants no cry was raised, no voice was heard against the appellation. Nor is this strange, for their actual circumstances remained unchanged; and when later legislation gradually showed some concern for them, and laid greater obligations on their masters, they may have found themselves really better off than during their so-called liberty."

Between the series of events that have now been described and the corresponding history in the West, the similarity is great, but the contrast also is great. The origin of the aristocracy and the land grants, the increase of the latter under the endeavor of the nobles to throw off control, the nature of the title changing from the personal benefice to the hereditary feud, and the tendency of the constant commotions to depress the freedom of the people, were broad principles alike in both halves of Europe. But though the seeds of feudalism were the same, the soil and the skies were different. In Russia the foreign lords were not conquerors, but invited masters; their number was small, and the territory much vaster than that of

the several members of the Roman Empire, overrun by the numerous German races; the communal organization of the nation gave the people a firmer hold on the soil and their own independence than the individual system of France and Germany; — all, facts which would tend to delay the enslavement of the people. Further, certain most important influences before referred to were absent here, — the Roman law, the Roman Church, the civilization already extant, which created in the West a more earnest striving for the re-establishment of social order, and greatly hastened the maturity of that form which presently developed itself. That form also contained within itself, in the embryo of the middle class, its own successor. In Russia, every cause was less concentrated, every movement consequently slower.

The authority which had confirmed the power of the master was now more than ever called upon to guard against its abuse. Such restraint had from the oldest time been needful. In the most ancient Russian code (A.D. 1017), cruelty to the peasant is forbidden under penalty of a fine. In A.D. 1550, a law against rape and mutilation is found on the statute-book of Ivan IV.; and another which declares that the serfs who pay their legal “obrok” (money-rent) shall be exempt from *corvée* service. Whatever protection the government pretended to afford, it is certain that never were the serfs such mere chattels before the law, never was the idea of human property so predominant in Russia, as during the century that followed Peter’s death, under the influence of the system he had called into being. It once occurred to Peter that “it is a thing which causes tears to flow for men to be sold like cattle, parents to be separated from their children, and husbands and wives from each other”; but he did not put a stop to the practice. He and his successors did not hesitate to lavish on their favorites the crown domains, with the peasants who dwelt on them, and to convert the industry of whole communities from agriculture to manufactures. Catharine II. extended the *ascriptio glebæ* to Little Russia, which had before been free from the curse. Nor were the private proprietors, from the highest to the lowest, slow to follow the suggestion, that the labor of their serfs belonged absolutely to them, and could be employed and commuted at

their pleasure. The peasants were summoned from the field to become house servants, sent into mines and factories, leased to contractors, or compelled to hire their own time at heavy prices, and not rarely sold outright. But all this only hastened the era of freedom.

Early in the reign of Alexander I. emancipation was seriously discussed; and in the Baltic provinces, where the population was more than elsewhere German rather than Russian in its origin and feeling, it was actually accomplished with the aid of the proprietors themselves (1816–1819). The latter, however, retained all the land in their own possession, the serfs acquiring only personal freedom, and becoming their tenants; but more recently humanity or expediency has led the nobles to establish loan-funds, by which the peasants are aided in buying their farms. Alexander also renounced the practice of giving away the crown peasants, but in the Western provinces substituted for it one nearly as bad,—the *temporary* grant of the crown estates with their population. Under Nicholas, the efforts of his minister, Cancrin, to develop manufactures are said to have had a special influence in hastening emancipation. The nobility led the way, and both in the cities and on their estates erected factories of all kinds. The rich merchants, a shrewd but uneducated class, followed in their steps. The government nurtured the growing interest with judicious protection. In the course of twenty years thousands of manufacturing establishments were scattered over the country, and the large cities had assumed quite a new aspect. Moscow, earlier the home of the proud Boiars, with a hundred thousand house slaves, was already, in 1843, when Haxthausen visited it, peopled with as many busy artisans. Agriculture seriously felt the loss of so many strong arms. But a more marked effect was the change in the condition of the serfs thus employed. At home in their own villages, where all were indeed exposed to oppression, the life perhaps of the majority was yet not actually much harder than that of the peasant in other European countries. But those who were now sent from the fields to the factories usually passed from the care of interested masters into the power of contractors and employers, to whom they were simply hired instruments. The proprietors found it much more lucrative to

hire out their hands and engage others for their own establishments. Such a number of abuses, such an increasing mass of social evil, sprang into existence, that the government felt more and more strongly the necessity of grasping the whole subject in order to apply to it some decisive and comprehensive treatment.

During the reign of Nicholas not less than one hundred and eight edicts in regard to the serfs are said to have been issued. Among them the most important were:—1. A prohibition to sell serfs apart from land. 2. A ukase of 1842, which accorded to the owners permission to make legal contracts with their serfs, and thus to change them into tenants paying a fixed rent. The government itself became responsible for the fulfilment of these contracts, but very few of the nobles availed themselves of the privilege. 3. A system of public loans to needy proprietors, who gave in pledge their lands and serfs. On foreclosure of the mortgage the people became crown peasants, and by this means thousands acquired the comparative freedom of that class. 4. Laws authorizing communes, and finally individuals, to buy land at the public sales of the estates of needy proprietors, — but under a very restricted right of alienation. 5. The introduction, or rather the revival, in some of the Western provinces, of Inventories, — village statutes that defined the relations of the nobles with the peasants. All these alleviations, however, failed to cure the trouble, because they did not really reach it. Nicholas succeeded in correcting certain abuses, but something more than a palliation of the existing system was needed. Alexander II. ascended the throne in March, 1855, and within the month it was announced that serfdom must be abolished.

It has been estimated that 325,000,000 acres of the soil of Russia proper were at the time of emancipation in the hands of the nobility, and that their serfs upon this territory numbered about twenty-three millions.* Of the land still belonging to

* The official estimate of 1863 (Schnitzler, Vol. I. p. 293) gave in the forty-nine provinces of European Russia 22,546,732 serfs; of these 1,382,783 were the “*dvo-rovyé*,” personal serfs, house servants, &c. In Siberia there were only about 4,000 serfs. The crown peasants at the same time numbered 20,050,248. Besides these there was a special class of serfs, comprising those who were regarded as the pri-

the state, more than one half, constituting an area about as large as that owned by the nobles, was occupied by the twenty million crown peasants, who formed the second great class of agriculturists. The rest of the public land was in great part waste and wood. Indeed, of the populated districts probably less than forty per cent was in actual use. Beside the serfs proper and the crown peasants there was a third class, free peasants who lived on their own ground, comprising freed serfs, certain colonists, and the so-called Odnodvortzi * (freeholders of a single manor). These Odnodvortzi seem in part to be of Finnish extraction, the descendants of warriors settled for the protection of the boundaries, in part the impoverished descendants of the lower Polish nobility. Their freeholds are so far their own that they may be sold, yet with certain restrictions in regard to purchasers. Further, the Crim-Tartars, and the Cossacks of Little Russia, the Don, and the Ural, are included under this head. These hold a portion of their land in individual, a larger portion in joint possession.

In order to understand the processes and results of the measures of emancipation adopted by the present Czar, it is important to have a clear idea of the nature of the two largest classes, and of the distinctions between them.

I. *The Crown Peasants.*—The communal organization, to which we have already alluded, prevails among the serfs, but is seen in its perfection among the crown peasants, where there is no proprietor's will to modify it. Each commune forms a unit, possessing collective rights and regarded as hereditary tenant of the land occupied by it. Without the right of alienation, it holds the perpetual usufruct of the same, and for this it pays the crown a money rent (obrok). Woods and pastures are used in common; the arable ground is divided into shares. In this distribution the land is first classified according to its distance from the village, — for the houses are almost invaria-

vate possession of the Czar and the imperial family. These "appanage peasants," numbering 2,070,013, occupied a position between the crown peasants and the serfs, — in government, taxation, and privilege more closely approximated to the former. They were partially emancipated in 1858, and in 1863 were placed on the same footing with the freed serfs.

* Their number in 1838 was calculated at 1,365,886 males. Schnitzler, Vol. I. p. 417.

bly grouped in the Russian rural districts,—then, according to the nature or fertility of the soil, into portions as nearly homogeneous as possible. Of each section every adult male or “*tiaglo*” * receives by lot a narrow strip, so that the share may consist of several separated pieces. Each commune has its skilful, traditionally educated surveyors, who superintend the whole arrangement, it is said, to the general satisfaction. A new apportionment has usually been made every nine years, or oftener, and was prescribed in each census year. But of late it has been complained of as the “black” division; and the more common practice now is to reserve a number of lots, which are leased for the common benefit, or assigned, as occasion demands, to new members. The arguments for and against this system, that seems so strange to us, have been warmly discussed by the Russian politico-economists. Haxthausen, a decided conservative, declares himself unreservedly in its favor. Its principal disadvantage is its bad effect on agriculture. No one cares to manure and improve the land which he must soon give up to another. Its great benefit is its constant provision for the growing generation, by which pauperism is never entailed, and the son escapes the consequences of his father’s indolence.

Among the crown peasants the commune must contain at least fifteen hundred “souls,”—smaller villages uniting to make up the necessary number, as several communes unite to form the canton. The commune assembly consists of elected elders, one from every five households. These elders choose by ballot the village chief, and send a committee from their number to represent the commune in the canton assembly, which exercises a similar right of election in regard to its officers. Each commune and each canton choose also certain “men of conscience” to decide minor civil and police cases. The commune is responsible for the payment of all public taxes, and for the delivery of its proportionate number of recruits;

* The Russian term “*tiaglo*,” *hearth*, signifies an arbitrary unit of laboring force, used as the basis of distribution of the land and taxes. Its amount varies in different parts from one to three or more males; but usually the idea of a married couple, a man and his wife, seems to be at its root. The *official* unit is the “soul,” i. e. the *male*. But on the private estates, and especially where statute labor, not obrok, is rendered, the “*tiaglo*” is more generally employed.

and to execute these duties, it has a very extended control over its members, much resembling that of the proprietor over his serfs. The admission or discharge of members, the issue of passes to those who leave their home, corporal punishment up to a certain number of stripes, even the banishment of incorrigible offenders to Siberia, come within the functions of the assembly. The sum which the crown peasant pays the government is very moderate. The land-tax proper varies from 2.15 to 2.56 rubles per male. Haxthausen, disclaiming anything like absolute accuracy, however, estimates the average annual amount of all dues, state and commune,* at 7.24 rubles (about \$ 5.50) "for every male capable of labor." Till 1844, the payment, except in the Western provinces, was levied as a capitation tax, and by its uniformity had become a source of great hardship to the poor. The arrears were every year heaped up enormously, and could only be cancelled by direct remissions. After several previous abatements of this kind, 66,980,537 rubles were remitted between 1826 and 1836, and yet the existing arrears amounted to over 63,000,000. In the Western provinces, however, the crown peasants were under a wholly different administration. There the lands were let out to Polish nobles, and the peasants required to perform statute labor. Though this labor was regulated, the land allotments were not, and, as a consequence, the "arendators" absorbed all the land they could, cheating the government, and robbing their dependants. Through this oppression, the Russian communal constitution, which had never held its own in these border regions against the tendency to individual land tenures, was almost completely abolished, and a class of peasants with little or no land was increasing. The reforms begun in 1837, under Count Kisselef's direction, were a noble attempt to execute a great task.†

* These consist of taxes for the administration, the repair of roads, &c. (often paid in work rather than money), for the recruiting and police service, for the central grain magazines (besides the local stores maintained in every commune by a contribution in kind as a reserve in case of poor harvests or famine), for the mutual fire insurance (three quarters per cent of the peasants' quarters are said to be destroyed yearly by fire), together with the general poll-tax and the special tax of the crown peasant for the use of the public land.

† Schnitzler says the reform would have produced great results, "si l'on eût trouvé pour l'appliquer un personnel suffisant et assez honnête."

By these measures, a special ministry was created for the care of the crown domains, a partially new organization introduced, and, what is most important, the poll-taxes have been gradually changed into a more equitable ground rent, based on a system of registration. In this way a more definite and permanent assignment of the lots has been secured. In the West, it became necessary to give a lot to each peasant, and change his *corvée* to a reduced money rent.

Compared with the serfs, this class has evidently enjoyed a high degree of personal freedom. The code of Nicholas describes them as the "free, rural population." The equal and temporary land allotment, the low rent, the right to travel and carry on trade or handicraft in all parts of the empire, the democratic management of their public concerns,—all this has in it much that is attractive till we encounter the influence of the government officials of the district and province. These authorities have by law only a general supervision over the commune, and are not to interfere in their internal affairs. But, practically, their rapacity has united with the ignorance of the peasants and that of their lower elective magistrates, who can seldom read or write, to produce a degree of oppression greater, according to some authors, than that which the private serfs had to endure. Without the protection of a master to prevent outrage, the crown peasant has had little hope of redress if outrage were committed. "The present administration of justice in Russia," says Dolgorukow in his "Truth about Russia,"—speaking, however, before the emancipation,— "is nothing but a series of briberies with an arbitrary decision to end with." The very extent of the reforms which were undertaken proves the previous existence of very great defects. As to the future status of the crown peasants, the Emperor has decided to make them land-owners on the same principles adopted in the case of the serfs; but the greater necessity of the latter obtained for them the first attention.

II. *The Serfs.*—The right to own one's fellow-creatures was, in Russia, the prerogative of the hereditary, and, exceptionally, of the personal nobility. The state regarded the proprietor as the legal representative of his serfs, and imposed on him general obligations to provide for their maintenance and welfare.

Beggary, for instance, was not permitted the crippled or aged serf; the master was obliged to see to it that the infirm were supported. For the public interests, a sufficient quantity of ground needed to be cultivated; therefore the master had to take care that all the necessary means were supplied, and, on occasion of famine, to find his people food. For a like reason, at the sale or mortgage of an estate, a fixed minimum of land was to be reserved per head for their use. The master was further responsible for all the serf's public dues, whether taxes, fines, or military service. Lastly, he was expected to appear for his serf before the civil tribunals, and was authorized to assist him in certain criminal cases. The commune administration, doubtless, rendered little personal concern necessary in these matters; but if the proprietor failed to discharge this obligation, he was amenable to various penalties. If a village was falling into ruin through neglect, or was subjected to outrageous burdens, the governor of the province could put the estate under guardianship, and forbid the interference, or even presence, of the proprietor; and a somewhat similar course was pursued to enforce the payment of public dues. If at a land sale the legal minimum were not reserved, and the deficiency were not in some way made good within a year, the serfs became crown peasants, and were settled on the state lands.

The serf was not allowed to possess real estate, but with the consent of his master could establish factories, carry on trade, and enter guilds. The law permitted him, also, to buy his freedom; but the price, and thus the privilege, were left to the master's discretion. Well-to-do peasants and artisans who had acquired some capital usually made strong efforts to become independent, and often paid hundreds and even thousands of rubles for themselves. It was not an infrequent speculation to buy an estate at a cheap rate in order to extract a profit from the people in this way. "Many of the rich merchants of St. Petersburg and Moscow," says Gurowski, "are either serfs who have purchased their liberty, or actual serfs paying a nominal obrok to their proprietors." In some such cases the serf was absolutely richer than his owner, whose pride or principle refused to manumit him. Military service also conferred freedom on the recruit, but the recruits were always selected

under the master's direction. Further, such crimes on the part of the noble as subjected his property to confiscation converted his serfs at the same time into crown peasants. By law the master could not compel a marriage, but, on the other hand, no woman could wed without his permission. In intermarriage of free peasants and serfs, the children inherited the father's condition. To leave the estate, and travel, settle, or labor elsewhere, the owner's pass was necessary. Fugitive-slave laws were vigorously enforced. The master had jurisdiction over the serfs in civil and police, but not in criminal cases. He could either himself inflict punishment,—not to the extent of bodily mutilation or danger to life,—or could apply to the government and have the offender sent to prison or into the army. For general refractoriness he was able to banish him entirely from his home by giving him up to the state, which was glad thus to obtain settlers for Siberia. Before 1858, the mere wish of the proprietor was sufficient to consign him to such exile. Complaints against the master by the serf, except for certain crimes against the state, were forbidden by law, under severe penalties.

The owner could at will summon field peasants to personal service in the house, or send his house servants to the field, remove them from one estate to another, and, under certain restrictions, apprentice them to strangers. As to the right of sale, the ukase of Nicholas mentioned above, which prohibited "the purchase of peasants without land," recognizes thereby the reciprocal idea implied in the *ascriptio glebæ*. Haxthausen says that the statutes on this point, in the General Code of Nicholas, "amount to this,—that the purchase of serfs shall take place only on condition that the buyers register the serfs on their own settled estates," (a provision, apparently, that would limit purchase to *landed* proprietors,) "and that the sale of serfs without land at fairs, where they are personally exposed at public auction, and also the sale or transfer of individuals separated from their families, are forbidden." Yet it is very certain that such or similar sales occurred. It is said, that, to evade the law, mock transfers of small land-lots were made.*

* Gurowski, who seems to be quite fearless in rounding his numbers and defining his statements, says, in his "Russia as It Is,"—"Any noble owning serfs

The serf had to pay the poll-tax and much the same general dues to state and commune as the crown peasant; but in place of the latter's special tax for the use of the public land, the other rendered a much higher tribute to his master. When paid in money, its amount was not fixed by law, but depended on the area of land allowed the serf, and the possibility of earning a living otherwise than by agriculture, — in other words, upon the need or pleasure of the proprietor. On the average, it was estimated at fifteen rubles for the tiaglo, or at ten for each male.

Haxthausen calculates the whole amount of public and private dues to have been 17.07 rubles for the serf, while for the crown peasant it was only 7.24. But from the many thousands allowed to leave their homes with their master's passport and find their support in some more profitable occupation than farming, a higher sum was usually required. The floating population of the cities was composed in great part of such serfs. How extortionate the demand at times became, especially on the part of small proprietors, may be judged from a story which Schédo-Ferroti tells.* His hired coachman, it seems, had a habit of falling asleep on his box. Finally, he discovered that, after working for him all day, the man spent the greater portion of the night in cobbling shoes. An inquiry brought out the confession that, through sickness, he was in arrears with his obrok, and was obliged to take this course to avoid being called home to endure the direct persecution of his mistress. She demanded a sum equal to the whole amount of his daily wages. Subsequently, he learned other facts. An estate of one hundred and fifty-six souls, that had furnished its proprietor an income of from five to six thousand rubles (nearly twice Haxthausen's average), and the peasants on which had been considered as in tolerably easy circumstances, was, after his death, divided among his five daughters. From twenty-seven persons who became Mme. D.'s property, she

must have for every one at least twenty acres of land"; and that "a serf becomes free if sold without land, or if the buyer does not possess the quantity of land required by law, or if his family is separated from him by sale." He also says, "The obrok generally through the whole of Russia, even on the estates of serfs, amounts to \$10 for each family having a separate communal household."

* *Première Étude sur l'Avenir de la Russie*, p. 76.

succeeded in extracting 3,100 rubles, — 2,400 from sixteen men, and, what relatively is a still higher sum, 700 from eleven women.

But so uncertain was a noble's income where the tribute was collected in money, that of late the labor system had more and more prevailed, till at the time of emancipation seven tenths of the serfs were thus discharging their obligations.

A law dating from the beginning of the century limited the service to three days in the week. But in the short summer season this rule was constantly transgressed. The masters then usually allowed the peasants only the hours absolutely necessary to cultivate their own land, — avoiding the law by their power to withhold a portion of this land and grant it back only on condition of their working for him more than the legal time. The harvest season, when everything with hands was pressed into the fields, was characteristically named "the season of woe." In winter, though the three-day limit was usually adhered to, the necessity of carrying the year's produce to the distant market renewed, in some districts at least, the summer's hardship. Besides this general ordinance, services were also minutely regulated, and varied according to the local methods of agriculture. Man's labor was distinguished from woman's, human labor from that of cattle, and rules were adopted for each kind. The fields cultivated for the master were usually separated from those belonging to the peasants. It is estimated that, in the interior provinces, the former claimed, as a rule, one half the arable and from two thirds to three fifths of the remaining land. In those regions where payment was made in money, the noble left nearly all, of course, to the use of the serfs. The size of the single lot differed in every province, often within the districts of one and the same province, and depended partly on the owner's will, in part on local customs, determined by the density of the population and the nature of the soil.

But the condition of the serfs as prescribed by the law probably suggests a much pleasanter aspect than the actual picture presented. A glance into Mr. Morley's book gives that picture very vividly. "Dogs! pigs!" was the usual address of an impatient aristocrat. "Sons and daughters of dogs! pigs

and swine! rats and vermin! defilement of mothers!" — were the terms heard from a lady proprietress. "No stick, no work," was the orthodox belief of even humane employers. In one scene a single "baron" cudgels forty serfs, not his own, who grumble, but are cowed. Witness too, the *common* treatment of the postilions, who form, in that country of magnificent distances and few railroads, a special and unfortunate class of the crown serfs. Tourgueneff well calls it a "hideous adage" which he heard from the lips of one of them, "It is only the lazy who don't thrash us." The serfs were not without rights, but within the legal limits the proprietor found ample scope for the exercise of arbitrary power over most of the relations of life. And yet this tells but half the truth. The law carried no guaranty of execution, had no vitality within itself, for the reason that the right of complaint against the master was wholly denied his serf. In the eye of the law he was not a mere chattel, like the negro at the South. But since the law had thus tied its own hands, he was virtually in a state of complete moral and physical dependence. The accounts of various authors are as widely apart as North from South-side views of our American slavery. Some use very strong lights, others the heaviest shades, in their descriptions. The same virtues and vices, moreover, on which such stress was laid by Southern slaveholders as peculiar to the negro and justifying his servitude, are put forward with almost equal prominence by the champions of Russian serfdom. "Sheep-like docility," "an incomparable sweetness of temper," affection for superiors, strong family and religious feeling, hospitality, are allowed them; but frivolity, carelessness, and indolence are their special traits. They "appear to have sucked in the propensity to steal with their mother's milk," and can "only be driven to industry by the whip or the burden of a heavy tribute"; while servility abounds, the sentiment of gratitude is almost unknown. According to the author of "Russia by a Recent Traveller" (1859), the physicians give evidence equally discreditable in regard to the purity of the women. The familiar refrains are also heard, "These qualities belong by nature to the Russian peasant," and "emancipation would certainly cause the ruin of a great number"

of them. Their friends, without wholly denying the existence of these traits, first diminish the exaggeration, and then justly trace their origin to the slavery itself. Haxthausen is among those who place themselves between extremes. He acknowledges the generally unhappy condition of the serf, but ascribes this, not to their attachment to the soil, but to the unlimited power of the masters. Their individual character, and not the law, determined the degree of their misery or happiness.

As with us, the number of actual owners was very small. In 1860 it was estimated at 120,197, of whom 35.7 per cent possessed each less than 21 male serfs, and averaged only 7.9. At the other extreme, 1,396 possessed 1,000 males or more, and averaged 2,202. The Chérémétief family alone was credited with from 128,000 to 200,000,—among whom were several millionnaires, possessing themselves, it is said, in their master's name, some six or seven hundred serfs. Over 17,000,000 of the whole serf population were owned by about 24,000 nobles. The smaller proprietors, therefore, who were as a rule the most cruel and extortionate, owned but a very small fraction of the twenty-three millions. But absenteeism on the part of the actual proprietors was a prevailing custom; and in such cases Russian overseers seem to have borne the same reputation as the corresponding class in America. To conclude this sketch of the old *régime*, we can hardly do better than to quote two passages,—the first from Tegoborski.

“In most of the districts which have fertile soil, easy and regular communication, and commercial activity, there are to be found among the serfs subjected to the obrok, as well as among those still under the *corvée* system, well-cultivated fields, stables well filled with cattle, and a degree of comfort not often met with in many countries of Central Europe.” *

Haxthausen says as much; but it must be remembered that such districts make a small portion of the Russian territory.

The other passage is by Haxthausen's annotator in St. Petersburg, one thoroughly acquainted with the subject through his own experience.

* Commentaries on the Productive Forces of Russia, English Translation, Vol. I. p. 227.

“How was it possible for the condition of the serfs to be otherwise than miserable, when we remember that they had no right to bring a charge against their masters? The serfs in the districts where the obrok (payment of dues in money) still prevailed were in the best position. There the peasant had, in fact, the free control of his whole life, if he paid his owner a moderate tax; yet he was by no means secure from the most outrageous extortion. Did his master die, or sell his estate, then the peasant had everything to fear. With the increase of luxury there arose various speculations on the part of many proprietors, who succeeded in collecting great properties in the following way. Estates, usually in the obrok regions, were bought at auction. The purchase-money was squeezed as quickly as possible by the buyer out of the richest among the peasants, and he thus found the estate in his hands without its having cost him a ruble. The obrok for all the serfs was then increased, and the sum thus extracted again employed in new purchases. In this way we have seen original capitals of twenty to thirty thousand rubles turned in the course of fifteen years into colossal possessions. But yet more oppressed were the peasants of those agricultural districts, where the *corvée* system was in vogue. It may be true that the half of them who had mild, humane, and educated masters were not in a pitiable condition; but the other half were either under the roughest and most uncultivated portion of the small nobility, who regarded nothing but their own material interests, and abandoned themselves to the grossest sensuality and passion at the expense of their serfs, or were subject to still more barbarous overseers, who occupied the place of the absentee proprietors. The master who chose could exercise his power over his serfs in the most shameless way, without limit or restraint; and many of our country nobles who were born and brought up on their estates recall, among the recollections of their childhood, many deeds of revolting cruelty, which took place almost before their eyes, and were by no means regarded as rare exceptions. Very faint was the voice raised against these outrages by those who had nothing similar on their conscience, and were really full of patriarchal care and tenderness for their dependants. What *could* limit the abuse, where the proprietor was wholly coarse and uncivilized, where the peasant was deprived by law of the right of complaint, and where public opinion did not condemn such deeds?”

Such in general was the condition of the serfs when Alexander II. succeeded to his father's throne, in March, 1855. He at once announced his intention to undertake the task of emancipation,—a task bequeathed him, as he felt, by his

ancestors, and rendered necessary by the circumstances of the time. His nobles recoiled before the thought of a revolution which would not only deprive them of property, but would destroy the whole social fabric of the nation as it then existed. The measure also, granting its necessity, seemed to admit of two radically different modes of execution: either the immediate and complete rupture of every bond between the serfs and the proprietors, and the direct indemnification of the latter by the state for the lands yielded up by them,—a scheme which would involve an immense and dangerous financial operation; or a more gradual liberation, in which the peasants themselves by labor, rent, and purchase should be the principal agents in the process of redemption. Land—there was no serious question about this—the freedmen must have, or enfranchisement would mean nothing but pauperization. The latter of the two methods, as we shall see, was that adopted by the government; the nobles, on the other hand, as long as they could, clung almost unanimously to the other, and placed every obstacle in the Emperor's way. At last, however, his firmness reduced them to quiet submission and co-operation. His first step was to appoint a secret commission, which assembled in his capital, January 3, 1857, to consider the general question of emancipation. The difficulties of the enterprise, and the consequent responsibility, were not underrated. The twenty-three million private serfs were distributed over an area equal to half Europe, and their condition had assumed, in almost every province, local peculiarities originating in variety of soil and race, and hardened into custom by centuries of history. It was hopeless to deal with this subject in the usual way. Hitherto it had been the policy of Russian state-craft to divine, discuss, and arbitrate upon the wants of the people within the ministerial *sancta*, whence the edicts, complete and imperative, issued forth to bind the conduct of the whole series of officials, high and low, far and near. But the detail was in this case too vast, the problem too new, to be thus handled. As its successful solution also would finally depend on its general comprehension, and as for this purpose it must sooner or later be referred to public opinion, it was thought better to enlist and train that opinion by demanding

its assistance from the outset. Alexander resolved, therefore, to adopt an entirely new procedure. In addition to the secret commission he established in each province a committee of resident nobles to collect all preliminary information and report plans for the abolition, at the same time stating for their guidance the leading principles upon which the government had already determined. Throughout their whole proceedings a careful rein was kept upon these local committees, that they might not turn aside from the course laid down. In order to stimulate the Russian nobility, he also tried to bring the Lithuanian nobles, on whose estates the peasants had already acquired partial independence through the system of inventories introduced by Nicholas, to declare in favor of his intention; and his circular of November 24th, 1857, asserting that they had done so, produced a great sensation and much anxiety.

Early in the following year the secret commission in St. Petersburg became the Central Commission for the Empire; and in March, 1859, Redaction Committees were appointed, and divided into three sections, judicial, administrative, and financial, to revise and harmonize the provincial reports. By the labors of these three bodies, the necessary details were collected, and the many various theories discussed with the utmost thoroughness. No opinion that was worth hearing was discarded. Intelligent proprietors, official and non-official, and even commune-starosts and estate overseers were summoned as witnesses or as members to the Redaction Committees. The process, both in the provinces, where forty-eight* committees with 1,377 members were at work, and in St. Petersburg, went on with great method; and the digested result was constantly appearing in print and circulated among the participants for their further instruction. Meanwhile several circulars were issued to defeat any attempted evasion of the impending changes. Many owners, for instance, wished to save their lands by at once voluntarily freeing their serfs. After four hundred and seven sessions, in the course of nineteen

* Forty-six, says Schnitzler.

months, the redaction was completed ; * and finally an imperial manifesto, dated February 19, O. S. (March 3,) 1861, proclaimed the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, and promulgated a series of seventeen ordinances, embracing all the general and local legislation which was necessary to carry it into effect.

These laws may be summed up under three heads : —

1. Personal freedom and civil rights are conferred on the serfs ; the right to make contracts, to own personal and real estate, to sue, be sued, and bear witness before the courts, to change residence and occupation, to engage in trade and manufactures, — all under the general laws of the Empire.

2. The perpetual usufruct of their homesteads and of a certain area of land is secured to them, in return for which a certain rent in money or in service is guaranteed to the proprietors. The legal amounts, however, are only binding where no amicable arrangement can be agreed upon by the two parties. But in all cases a kind of contract defining these amounts and all the future relations between proprietor and tenant is to be introduced on each estate within two years from the date of the edict. During this period the peasants are considered as “temporarily bound,” or apprenticed. At any time, however, they have the *right* to buy the homesteads, and permission, conditioned on the proprietor’s consent, to buy their lands, — both at a fixed valuation. The government offers to assist in the purchase. This done, they are released from all obligation to their former owners.

3. A system of administration is organized within the commune, in some degree assimilated to that in use on the crown estates ; and officers and tribunals are appointed to carry out the new laws and to arbitrate between the land-owners and their new tenants.

The Homestead and Land-Lot. — The two most difficult questions which the committees were called on to discuss concerned the limits of the homestead and those of the field-lot. As the peasant was authorized to buy the former whenever he

* “Four-and-twenty thick folio volumes” were required for the report of the four years’ labor of the numerous committees.

might wish, without consulting the proprietor's pleasure, it was necessary to define minutely its appurtenances. The village premises include the houses and outbuildings, kitchen gardens, hop and hemp gardens, the pens and watering-places for the cattle, the streets, &c. If the boundaries have never been fixed, a certain maximum of land for a homestead lot is allowed per head, and the lines are to be drawn by mutual agreement, or under the direction of the "Arbiter." The principles kept in view in dividing the arable and pasture ground were, to endow the freedmen with as much land as they had needed while serfs for their support, and at the same time to reserve for the proprietors the exclusive possession of a portion of their property.

As the amount used by the serfs had varied greatly, however, in different parts of the Empire, it was impossible to attain the end by a single and uniform rule. The method pursued is as follows. The country is divided, according to the nature of the soil, into three zones, and each zone into circuits. To the first zone belongs the soil that is neither "black earth" nor that of the steppe region; to the second and third, respectively, that of the latter two kinds. In each circuit of the first two zones, maximum and minimum limits are established for the portion allowed to each male; within these limits the actual size of the existing allotment is to be maintained. At least one third, however, of all productive land is secured to the proprietor, in case such provision does not infringe upon the peasants' minimum, which equals one third of their maximum allowance.* But in the third zone, that of the broad steppes, custom had hitherto settled no system, and here the law prescribes a definite allotment for the peasant in each circuit, and fixes the proprietor's minimum at one half. The lot therefore varies, according to situation, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to over 30 acres; the average for the adult male being $9\frac{1}{2}$.† Although the estimate is made

* "When the serfs are in excess of the land," says Tilley, "the proprietor is required to give up two thirds of his estate and retain one third, the surplus peasants being removed to government land." Haxthausen's expression lacks fullness, but implies that the proprietor may come off without any land.

† $3\frac{1}{2}$ déciatines. The déciatine = 2.7015 acres. This is Schnitzler's statement. Tilley thinks eight acres beside the homestead lot is the average amount.

upon the number of individuals, the assignment is made to the joint commune, to whose judgment the method of distribution is left. By the vote of two thirds of the members and the consent of the proprietor, the land can be divided once for all, and held *in perpetuo* by the separate families, — a tenure preferred by the government. Only productive land goes to constitute this grant, — in general, the same that had been before in use. When, under the new regulations, the former area needs to be increased or diminished, the law carefully prescribes what parts must be assigned, or may not be appropriated, by the owner. Additions are to be near to the village, and contiguous, if possible, to the other commune lands. The law also watches over any exchanges that become necessary in order to consolidate the portion of the peasants in lands distinct and apart from those of the proprietor. The latter may, under certain restrictions, compel the removal of the peasants' houses, and demand that a mutual boundary be drawn. But for such measures he must obtain the Arbiter's sanction, defray the expenses, and pay for the improvements which he forces his tenants to abandon. Where the proprietor formerly furnished his serfs with fuel, the delivery must be continued during nine years; its quality and kind, as well as the amount and kind of payment for it, are to be determined by the Arbiter according to local circumstances.

The Rent. 1. *In Money.* — With equal minuteness are the regulations in regard to the rent laid down. It was a settled principle of the whole legislation to disturb existing customs as little as possible by the new arrangements. The government, therefore, though it strongly favored the obrok system, — that by which the master's dues were paid in money, — did not summarily abolish the *corvée* service, which was prevailing among at least seven tenths of the serf population. It gave rules for each system. For the obrok estates, it established a fixed rent of twelve, ten, nine, or eight rubles per male, according to locality. Within twenty-five versts of St. Petersburg, for instance, it is twelve rubles per male, but in most parts of the Empire nine is nearer the average. This sum, however, corresponds to the maximum allotment; and a scale was furnished by which the component fractions of the one are

proportioned to those of the other.* If an estate offer some special advantage or disadvantage for gaining a livelihood, the rent, as also the amount of land in peculiar cases, may be slightly increased or diminished by order of the Provincial Commission, but, if paid wholly in money, is never to exceed the sum formerly required of the serf. The distribution of the rent among the individual members is left to the commune itself; where the land is held permanently by the families, it is assessed, of course, according to the size of the lots. The pay-days, if not settled by amicable agreement, are appointed by the Court of Arbiters, and the proprietor is allowed to require a six months' advance.

2. *In Labor.* — On the estates where the peasants render payment in labor, a certain number of days' work, viz. forty for a man and thirty for a woman, is fixed as the annual compensation for the maximum allotment, and is proportionally diminished for a less amount. Of these, three fifths are to be "summer days," two fifths "winter days," the former not to exceed twelve hours, the latter nine hours, excluding rest. But, at the option of either peasants or proprietor, a task system, as prescribed by the Provincial Commission, may be adopted instead of the time rates. The whole number of days required in a half-year from the commune, or respectively from the family, is divided equally among the weeks of the same, and in general not more than one third of the week's service can be required on any one day. When the people work in common, the proprietor tells the "starost" ("elder," the chief of the commune), at the beginning of the week, the number of laborers of each sex wanted, and on what days they must be furnished; the appointment is then made by the commune officers according to the village register, and the summons served by the starost on the evening preceding the work-day, with in-

* Throughout the first zone, for instance, for the first déciatine of the individual's maximum allotment, one half the maximum obrok is to be paid; for the second, an additional fourth; and the remaining fourth, divided equally among the remaining déciatines, gives the rent to be paid for each of these. Thus, on an estate containing 240 males, in a district where the maximum obrok is 10 rubles, and the maximum land-lot 4 déciatines per head, and the amount of land actually granted the peasants 900 déciatines, they pay for the first 240 déciatines, @ 5 rubles, 1200 rubles; for the second 240, @ $2\frac{1}{2}$, 600 rubles; for the remaining 420, @ $1\frac{1}{4}$ rubles, 525 rubles: in all 2,325 rubles, or 9.48 per head.

structions as to the nature of the service. The peasants supply implements and teams, the latter at a fixed rate, one day's work with two horses being equivalent to one and a half days of personal labor. In case of sickness, substitutes must be furnished by the commune, and a similar but less exacting rule is applied to the separate families. Not only an overseer to represent the proprietor, but some village official in behalf of the peasants, is present in the field during the day. At its close a receipt for service is given to the persons engaged, and registers of performance are kept.

To secure the payment of these dues, the law provides that the obrok shall take precedence of all other debts, public or private. For delay, a fine of one per cent a month is added to the amount. Where the commune is collectively responsible, it must pay the arrears of its members, and proceed to enforce repayment on its own account by such methods as the hiring out of the peasant or one of his family, or the sale of his property. Should the commune not discharge its obligations, the proprietor appeals to the Arbiter, who is to take such measures as may be necessary; in extreme cases he deprives the commune of part of its land, puts the whole under guardianship, or even surrenders it again temporarily to the master's disposal. Where the land has been shared permanently among the households, it depends on a second agreement between the two parties whether the responsibility for the rent shall also become individual. Should it be so decided, the commune directory is still the agent, at the proprietor's demand, to exact collections. For the first nine years a purchased homestead is exempt from attachment, but subsequently even this may be sold, or revert to the land-owner, to pay the lacking rent.

In order to facilitate the speedy purchase of the homestead, over whose acquisition the government watches with great interest, the peasants were allowed, under certain conditions, to change their labor to a money payment after the expiration of the first two years. For this purpose their service, reckoned by the day's work, was appraised by the Provincial Commission. A similar right was extended to serfs registered as belonging to certain factories, smelting and salt works. Further, of the whole rent, thus uniformly estimated in money, the law decided

what portion should be considered as belonging to the homestead. The villages were for this purpose classified according to their local advantages ; and, of the whole yearly assessment of nine or ten rubles per male, the homestead pays from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ rubles, in certain cases a little more.*

The Nine-Year Law. — Another law, beneficent to both parties at the introduction of the new system, by preventing injurious consequences from the first excitement, obliges the peasants to hold themselves responsible for the whole of the land grant during the first nine years of freedom, except where a commune jointly, or a peasant singly, acquires actual ownership of a piece of land under certain limitations of size and distance ; or when, by mutual consent, a portion is renounced, in which case the diminution must leave an area equal at least to half the legal maximum of the circuit. In a single case this area may be reduced still further ; viz. when, by formal agreement between the proprietor and the commune, the latter receives, as an *outright gift* from the old master, an amount of land equal, the homestead lot included, to one quarter of the maximum ; in such case the proprietor obtains nothing from the government, and all former relations with the peasants are at once severed.† In order to enforce the responsibility for the land, a member is allowed, during these nine years, to remove from the commune only with the permission of both proprietor and commune assembly ; but if the latter give and the former withhold it, appeal may be made to the Arbiter. After the nine years the purchase of the homestead alone is sufficient to authorize a surrender of the remaining land, which in such case reverts, first to the commune, then to the owner ; in other cases an emigrant must make some satisfactory arrangement by which his portion of the obrok or the

* In March, 1863, when the two years allowed for the introduction of the new system expired, of 112,000 contracts to be drawn up, 102,552 had been signed, and 92,001, representing a male population of 8,364,594, were ready to be carried at once into execution. Out of every 100 peasants, 33.7 per cent remained subject to the *corvée* system, with the reserved privilege of commutation mentioned above ; 50.8 per cent adopted the obrok system ; and 15.5 per cent had already become proprietors of homestead and land. Schnitzler, Vol. I. pp. 412, 413.

† It need hardly be said that but few proprietors adopted this method of settlement.

labor shall in future be discharged. And at all times a peasant who wishes to change his residence can do so only on condition that he leave behind him no dues unpaid, and no helpless family to be supported at the public expense. The consent of the commune which he proposes to enter is also necessary, in case he is to share in its land rights.

State Taxes. — The freed commune, besides its land rent, is also collectively responsible for the state and local taxes; e. g. the general poll-tax, the imposts to defray the expense of the new administration, village schools, roads, etc., those levied to maintain the paupers and orphans, to stock the public provision magazines, and to insure the village against fire and other disasters. These are usually to be assessed by the commune assembly according to the size of the lot used or owned by the respective members, and to be collected by the starost or by a special officer elected for the purpose. Payment is to be enforced as for the obrok. Recruits may be appointed either by lot or by turn on the register, and must be furnished *in natura*; only in a few border and Crimean districts is a commutation of three hundred rubles per man allowed. But previous releases from military obligation (*Rekrutirungsquittungen*) may be bought, as among the crown peasants.

Purchase of the Homestead and Lands. *The Government Loan.* — The commune jointly or the peasants singly have the right to buy their homesteads, under the single restriction that at the time of purchase no arrears be due to either state or proprietor. But the *land* is only to be bought with the proprietor's consent. In case the price cannot be decided on by mutual agreement, the annual rent is considered as six per cent of the actual value; in other words, the legal price is $16\frac{2}{3}$ times the legal obrok, or the year's service estimated in money. The sum total for the village is divided among the heads of families by a decree of the assembly confirmed by the proprietor. In communes where the joint usufruct prevails, a peasant who singly buys his portion has to pay one fifth more. But if the government had done no more than bestow this privilege in words, it would have been as unavailable to the serfs as Lincoln's proclamation without the Northern army to the negroes. Few of the peasants could ever command the cash necessary to

buy their lands; yet, without land as well as homes, they would probably pass from servitude of one kind to that of another. For the present, therefore, the state itself assumes the greater part of the burden. The peasants — only, however, those who are discharging their dues in money — receive a loan from the government, upon condition, as Haxthausen understands it, that, together with the homestead, they buy either the whole, or at least a certain portion, whose minimum is fixed, of their field lands. In the former case the government advances four fifths, in the latter three quarters of the price, — this partly in state bank certificates, partly in government bonds,* which are gradually changed into bank certificates. Should the proprietor be already indebted to the state, the amount of his debt is deducted from the sum paid, — a proceeding which practically reduces the expenses to the government fully one half! Apparently the proprietor has in some degree the right of forcing the purchase on a commune, though not on single individuals; for our author says that, when he does this, he cannot claim the unpaid balance, unless the peasants desire only a portion of their land, in which case they must pay a sum equal to one fifth of the government advance, the proprietor thus sustaining a loss of one tenth. But where the demand comes from the side of the peasants, these must make up the complete price at the time of the transfer. In place of the obrok to their old masters, the peasants then pay yearly to the state treasury six per cent on the advance. This covers the interest on the bank certificates issued to the proprietors, with all incidental expenses, and gradually forms a sinking fund, which, it is estimated, will in forty-nine years extinguish the debt.

Proprietors' Reserved Rights. — While the peasants are in the intermediate state of temporary obligation, the proprietor retains general protective rights over the commune, and a limited supervision of police matters, — a degree of authority which enables him to initiate measures for the public or private wel-

* These bonds, at first very low, afterwards rose in value through foreign speculation, and in September, 1863, were worth eighty-seven per cent of their face. Schnitzler says, "The government pays half in special certificates bearing $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest, issued in the name of the selling proprietor, and not negotiable; and the other half in negotiable five per cent bonds." (Vol. I. p. 409.)

fare of the members without placing them in his power for injury. With the commune he deals through the starost. He may also require information about all resolutions of the assembly; and if they infringe on his rights, he has ever, like the peasants, the privilege of appealing to the Arbitrer. Punishment is no longer to be inflicted by himself, but through the appointed officers, and in accordance with the legal regulations. On obrok estates he is allowed to lease his lands, including the peasants' assignment, for terms of twelve years; this, however, is not to interfere with the latter's right of purchase. But on the other estates, where labor is rendered, such personal service is allowed on no pretext whatever to revert to a tenant. In mortgages or sales, the peasants' lands may be included in the transfer only when the estate goes to an hereditary noble; if to a person of another class, at or before the time of transfer the peasants must become proprietors of their portion. In the division of an estate by sale or by inheritance, the single lots permanently held by families may be separated from each other; but in no case may the partition fall within such a lot, or upon the land collectively occupied by the commune.

The Western Provinces.—The above enactments hold good throughout the larger part of European Russia. But in Little Russia and the western provinces, those which were formerly under Polish and Lithuanian rule, there had long existed a different territorial organization, which in some degree affected the present changes. In this region, as has been mentioned, the commune system seems to have been strange to the feelings of the people,—perhaps on account of the German neighborhood,—and their incorporation with Russia had not eradicated the old practice of hereditary transmission of the family lot. As this had continued for many generations, the lots had become of very different size, and the serfs were in different conditions. Some were mere day-laborers, others had homesteads without fields, others again with the fields but an insufficient supply of cattle, and a fourth class with all three requisites of prosperous husbandry. In the Polish provinces particularly the government had encouraged fixity of tenure, in order to weaken the power of the nobility; and the “inventories” introduced here by Nicholas on the private as well

as on the crown estates sanctioned by law the existing system, and determined the amount of labor to be paid as rent. The new legislation, therefore, contents itself in general with confirming the usage thus established. In Little Russia, within the limits of maximum and minimum, the allotments are also left unaltered. The men alone need render the *corvée* service, and that only in person; for a certain portion of their land, for whose rent the labor of oxen is necessary, is specified as "supplementary," and may be resigned at pleasure to the proprietor, — contrary to the nine-year rule in Great Russia.

The Small Estates. — Special provisions were made in favor of the "small estates," viz. those that had less than twenty-one male serfs and contained less than a certain area of land. It was here that the evils of Russian serfdom culminated; at the same time it was to their proprietors that the emancipation was likely to prove most disastrous. In the interest of the one party it was expedient to sever the old connection as completely as possible; in that of the other, to furnish immediate aid. On these estates the peasants became individually, not jointly, responsible, and the proprietors were not bound to furnish the legal allotment to those previously unsupplied. But such peasants might, at their own request, be transferred to the crown lands, where timber for houses, cattle, implements, and money were gratuitously furnished them by the state, besides land and temporary exemption from the usual dues. Further, the peasants provided with land could also, at their request and with the proprietor's consent, be disposed of in the same way, in which case their lots would revert to the estate. And finally the proprietor might turn over his peasants *with* their lands to the crown, and receive in return $16\frac{2}{3}$ times the legal obrok of the district, the people becoming crown peasants, and paying at once the usual dues. Should the small proprietor be reduced to great poverty, especially should his property contain less than two thirds the maximum area allowed to this class of estates, he was entitled to still more assistance from the government. The funds assigned for this purpose were distributed among the provinces, and the method of application and conditions of grant were specified.

The House Servants. — Besides the great mass of agricul-

tural serfs, there were, moreover, several classes whose condition required separate legislation, — the most numerous among them that of the house servants, or personal serfs (“dvorovyie”). Part of these may have been the descendants of a genuine slave order, whose probable existence in the early times has been already mentioned. But many peasants had also been removed from their own category to this; for the 520,000 males reported in the census of 1851 had become 725,000 in that of 1858. It was ordered, therefore, that all who had actually occupied and cultivated land before this latter date should be considered as peasants in the application of the new laws. The house servants proper were to remain during the two years of preparation in the master’s service, at wages fixed by him, sustaining to him the same relations as before, except that they were to receive chastisement only through the police, and might complain to the Arbiter if abused. Those who were already hiring their own time were not to be deprived of this privilege, and their previous obrok was not to be increased, nor to exceed the maximum of thirty rubles for a man and ten for a woman. At the end of the two years, a free choice of occupation was allowed them, together with temporary exemption from most state taxes.

The New Administration. — To correspond to the new status of society, a new administration was needed. The communal principle afforded an admirable basis, — one that much lightened, through self-government, the work of superintendence; to stand between tenant and proprietor a strong and wholly novel power had to be created; while the higher control was necessarily left, as before, to a tribunal of the nobility. The lower organization much resembles that already described as existing among the crown peasants. All heads of families that belong to the village or part of a village constituting the commune are members of the assembly. They elect their starost, and such other officials as may be needed, perhaps a tax-collector and a magazine-inspector. The starost, as chief executive and judicial magistrate of the commune, carries out the orders of his superiors, and exercises the functions of a subordinate police judge, his right of punishment being limited to two days’ imprisonment or labor, or the fine of one ruble. One large com-

mune, or a collection of several not more than twelve versts distant from each other, form the "wolost," which, in the eye of the general government, is the lowest administrative unit. It must contain at least three hundred, and, unless a single large village, not more than two thousand males. The wolost and commune officials, with one representative from every ten households, compose its assembly, which, in its turn, elects the "Starschina" (the wolost mayor), whose appointment, however, must be confirmed by the Arbiter. The Starschina has assistants and a council, and is responsible for the police of the communes under his charge. From and by the peasants in the assembly are elected the four to twelve judges of the wolost court, of whom three at least must be present on the bench at a time. Their jurisdiction extends to suits involving one hundred rubles, or of any amount whatever in cases to be settled by compromise; in criminal cases they may sentence to corporal punishment. It is essentially an informal tribunal to settle as many disputes as possible by accommodation and according to local usages. The compensation of these different officials depends respectively on the two assemblies. Those elected are obliged to serve, except in case of certain specified excuses. During office they enjoy some special immunities.

The officer whose name appears most frequently in the new laws is the Arbiter (*Friedensvermittler*). He belongs to the nobility, of the hereditary class by preference, and during the first three years was to be appointed by the governor of the province, with the approval of the senate. His jurisdiction covers,—1. Disputes between peasants and proprietors, and complaints against commune officials; 2. Ratification of certain acts, e. g. the amicable agreements between the two parties; 3. Declaring in operation the regulations or contract made upon each estate, determination of the boundaries, temporary suspension of the starost and starschina from their respective posts, and enforcement of the payment of arrears in the obrok; 4. Police control over the house servants and hired employees of the proprietor, who are not subject to the commune authorities. The Arbiters of the various districts into which each province is divided constitute together the District Assize Court, under the presidency of the District Marshal of

Nobility. They receive appeals from the Arbiter's decision, and complaints against the wolost officials, and settle the more important and general questions which may arise under the new arrangements. The highest tribunal is the Provincial Commission, which consists of the governor of the province (*Gouvernement*), aided by three high officials and four proprietors. Agreements between the peasants and proprietors which require special dispensation of the laws regarding land or rent, must be referred to it; it was also charged with much of the preliminary work, e. g. with organizing the communes into wolosts, and elaborating a scale of wages for the peasants who should change their *corvée* service into an obrok.

Introduction of the New System.—The Two Years' Delay.—The Contracts.—The imperial proclamation and the accompanying orders bear the date of February 19 (O. S.), 1861. The Provincial Commissions, organized in the preceding December, were instructed to proceed at once to their task. Within nine months the formation of the wolosts was to be accomplished, the arbiters and the wolost officers to be chosen and to enter upon their duties, and each proprietor to report a draft of the regulations to be adopted on his estate, modelled on a scheme drawn up by the Commission. These contracts (*chartes réglementaires*) were to state the number of peasants, to give an estimate of the land allotted them and of the rent or service due from them, and to define all the relations established by the new laws between tenant and landlord. They were to be revised by the Arbiter on the spot, and word for word read and discussed in the presence of representatives of the peasants and disinterested witnesses; having received official approval, they were again to be read, and the meaning of each clause separately explained before the whole commune assembly, when, finally, they were declared to be in operation. Three copies were preserved, one by the government, one by the proprietor, one by the peasants themselves. For the full confirmation and introduction of these charters, the period of two years was allowed. Within this time everything was to be placed on its new footing; till then the old order should be maintained within the commune, except that the judicial powers of the proprietor ceased at the end of the nine months, when

the wolost courts received the jurisdiction. In all these proceedings no complaint of past abuse could be preferred by the peasants against their old masters.

In the laws which we have thus sketched in mere outline, the general principles catch the eye at once, as well as the scope which their authors intended they should have. A definite result was aimed at, and, so far as possible, distinct and complete methods were employed. Doubtless, for such an undertaking they will prove, perhaps have proved, partially inadequate; but they plainly belong to no half-way legislation. Nothing that can be foreseen is left to accident or to ill-will. The minute adaptation to local circumstances is one of the most remarkable features of the whole attempt, one that of course cannot be represented in an abstract like this. The determination is manifest throughout to place the peasants entirely beyond the power of their former owner; and even when the levers by which the movement is to be effected are put in his hands, he himself is placed in such a position that he can hardly use them save in the right direction. Moreover, where good-will exists, it is not frustrated by formality. Almost every provision begins with words which allow to the proprietor, within certain restrictions, the alternative of amicable agreement with the freedmen; and Alexander in his manifesto relied upon such agreement to remove the difficulties which the application of rules, however minute, to the thousand-fold variety of local circumstances will unavoidably produce.* The serfs are not only made freemen, but their new condition is thoroughly organized and defended against future attack.

But in spite of its far greater magnitude as regards numbers, the task for Russia, at least so far as direct measures can accomplish it, is in reality enviably small as compared with our own. The greater vigor of our national life gives us the advantage in any work of absorption and reconstruction. But in Russia the government has, in the first place, absolute power to ordain the revolution. No state rights there interfere with human rights. It adopts, in the second place, as a groundwork of the new social fabric, the untouched foundations

* Of the contracts reported in 1863 (*vide* note, p. 71), nearly one half had been arranged by mutual consent.

of the old. Even the superstructure is not so much to be rebuilt as to be converted to new uses. The peasants are freed, and their future life and prosperity insured by a single act. The government simply steps between the owner and the owned, and says to the one: "Remain as you are; your serf represented to you the yearly value of his obrok or service, minus the value of the land he used for his support. He shall still represent to you nearly the same worth.* But you must resign two things;—first, your control of his person; second, your control of that land which he actually needs." It turns to the serf and says: "Remain where you are. You have now no master but the law. Keep your land also; none shall take it from you. But you must pay a rent to the old landlord, about as much money or labor as you formerly gave him. Should you prefer, however, you may buy your house whenever you like; and your lot also, as soon as 'the Baron' is willing.

* What did the serf, or the state for him, really buy, his person or his land? Nominally the land; for the house servants and the obrok payers who hired their own time received their freedom *gratis* at the end of two years. Moreover, nearly all the preliminary reports submitted by the various Provincial Committees began with a preamble to the effect that "the nobility renounce forever, without claiming any indemnity, the right of possessing serfs." But if the following considerations are well based, the land was appraised higher than its actual market value. Haxthausen says that "one hundred souls represent on the average a property worth 25,000 to 30,000 rubles"; i. e. apparently each "soul" with his proportion of the land was worth 250 to 300 rubles. "Dans la plupart des cas les deux valeurs (le terrain même et la force des bras qui le cultivent) se balancent," says Schédo-Ferroti (*Étude*, &c., p. 22). According to this, the land alone would average for each "soul" 125 to 150 rubles in value; whereas the obrok legalized by the emancipation laws (8 to 12 rubles) represents a capital of 133 to 200. Now, when it is remembered that the land which the serf gets is not his proportion of the whole estate, but only of one half to two thirds of the whole (as one third or more is reserved for the proprietor), and that the exceptions to Schédo-Ferroti's statement are probably very numerous and all on one side, (for some writers say that, compared with the laboring force of an estate, the land was worth but a trifle,) it becomes pretty evident that the vast majority of the peasants pay for their freedom something more than the actual value of the house and lot. This conclusion corresponds to what Morley's author and others say,—"I am told that the market price of the land is not half the sum usually charged the peasant under the new laws." But, on the other hand, many proprietors have lost twenty per cent of the appraised values (see p. 73), and all have been compelled to receive their pay in government stocks at a depreciation of twenty to fifty per cent, while during the forty-nine years of free industry which will elapse before the land redeemed from the government will fully belong to the peasants its value will probably rise so much as to make the present appraisal seem very low.

If without money, the government will help you ; in this case you will be tenants of the crown, and your children will in the course of time become full proprietors." It favors certain preliminary measures, but, to avoid collision with prevailing customs, does not insist upon them. It empowers, but does not confer, complete independence. It is only imperative in securing personal liberty and the means of continued support. It establishes a democratic self-government in local affairs, and places in direct authority above and within reach of both parties an officer ever ready to arbitrate between them. Much, very much, depends on this functionary, it is true ; but apparently he has already cleared for himself a place in popular estimation that has long been unaccorded to a Russian official, and great hopes are built on his permanent usefulness.

It is unsatisfactory to end our inquiry here, to find that at present we can only compare the methods, not the results, of the two nearly simultaneous emancipations, — that in the Old World and our own in the New. On the eve before the movement, Dolgorukow, Tourgueneff, Schédo-Ferroti, and others, told us the "truth about Russia" most abundantly ; and their startling revelation of the hollowness and corruption within that huge shell made the European public sceptical as to the possibility of success in the enterprise. But in regard to its actual working we have been able to find only a few facts. Indeed, the most honest official report could not fairly represent the first stages of such a wide-spread and constantly advancing revolution. Even open-eyed travellers see but what comes under their eyes. The book which Mr. Morley has edited photographs vividly the scene of incoming liberty in a single locality, and is written by one who knew the Russian serf by personal contact. Tilley's volume, so far as it has to do with Russia, contains such information as a book-making traveller brings together, more from his reading than his sight-seeing. Schnitzler's is the work of a publicist, and helps us to little or nothing here. But from these and a few scattered sources we draw an indication of what has happened.

The voice of the Czar could overcome the reluctance, but not the anxiety, of the nobles, as they looked forward to the approaching enfranchisement. Yet, to their credit, there seems

to be good reason to believe that they gave themselves heartily to the plan when once announced, and tried their best to further its design. Alexander in his manifesto bestows words full of praise on their self-sacrifice. The *serf* regarded and discussed his future lot exactly as one would suppose. His logic had been: "God gave our forefathers the land to till; we are the children, the land is ours. The Czar is God's representative; him and those whom he sets over us we will serve, but the soil is ours." His words now were: "Has not our father, the Czar, God bless him! decreed our freedom, and shall we not soon do what we like, and be freed from the obrok?" But the first conclusion was retained, — "the land is ours"; and the idea of paying for it in any way was incomprehensible. The common impression seems to have been, that their lords would be pensioned by the Emperor, and removed to the cities.

The "Butter-week," the Russian carnival, was just over when the village priests read the edict of emancipation at all the altars in the Empire. Emissaries, it is said, had been sent out by the disaffected, and false proclamations circulated to create tumultuous risings among the people, and thus to damage their cause. But only in a few districts remote from the capitals was trouble occasioned. At Kesan, one of the pretenders who have played such a famous *rôle* in Russian history gave himself out for Alexander II., who had fled to them to escape an insurrection excited by the nobles in St. Petersburg! He collected around him some fifteen thousand men, who set the law at defiance in the name of the Czar, their persecuted liberator, and were only put down after bloodshed. In 1862 many owners anticipated the final movement, and nearly all who thus freed their serfs gained by their liberality. Thousands in the central districts crowded to Moscow, and the city for a time swarmed with peasants seeking work and finding none. "In a late country journey," says Morley's author, "I saw them crawling back to their villages, begging their way." Towards the end of this year the laborers struck in some places; crops were lost, and incomes much reduced. Alexander, later, made a tour through several of the principal towns, explaining in person that no more was to be expected; that the serfs' cry, "*Prebavit!*" ("Add to it!" "More!")

must cease; that it was useless to hang back, expecting that the land would be given to them without redemption. During the last two or three years a number of towns have been persistently ravaged by incendiary fires. Still, on the whole, *émeutes* and disturbances have been rare and local, and throughout the Empire the peasants have, as a rule, been accredited with good order during the transition.* In 1864 the writer just quoted revisited the village where he had witnessed the first eventful months of liberty. It had belonged to Count Pomerin, one of the owners who cut the bond at once, and treated his serfs most generously. "The change was almost miraculous. It was no longer a straggling village of mud huts, but a thriving town. The people are not like the same beings; and there is now decided evidence of the rise of a middle class,—a class once unknown in such places." Very many of the house servants have become small merchants and pedlers; and the cities have naturally felt the pressure of the great restless tide in the country. Moscow, it is estimated, has added fifty thousand to its population. The price of land, as well as of wages, is said to have risen, — the latter so much that the ex-proprietors find a double reason to condemn emancipation; the peasant holds his labor too high, and at harvest-time, when most needed, is apt to be busy on his own plot. The foreign merchants, on the other hand, are said to bear unanimous witness to the good effects of liberty.

How fast the change has advanced may be judged in some degree by the following extract from Haxthausen:—"According to the reports of June 1, 1865, 50.5 per cent of the serfs have become land-owners; with the aid of the government loan, 2,322,369 males; without this aid, 445,459; and through the ukases of March 1, July 30, and November 2 (1863?), all the serfs of the nine western provinces, viz. 2,295,026. In all, 5,062,854 males already enjoy full independence, and have no connection with the old proprietors. Of the 2,322,369, however, the accounts have been settled for only 2,148,186; and of the western serfs, for only 174,183." The ukases to which these western peasants owe their sudden enfranchisement were

* Before emancipation was broached, it is said that, on the average, thirteen proprietors were yearly murdered by their serfs.

occasioned by the Polish insurrection. Their previous *corvée* service was changed to an obrok, and reduced twenty per cent. All obligatory relations to their owners ceased definitely on the 1st of May, 1863. From this date payments were to be made to the district treasury, from which the proprietors should receive their dues till the transfer of the land was concluded. The commissions to whom the rectification of the inventories had been intrusted were employed to draw up for each estate, at the time of its inspection, the necessary act of purchase.

Within the upper strata of society, the fruits of emancipation are much better known. One effect, and that most often referred to, has certainly been to reduce many of the nobility to poverty, and not a few of the small proprietors, it is said, to actual ruin. But let two facts be remembered in this connection, apart from all questions of right; — that the whole number of proprietors was less than 125,000, so that each one's loss represents the gain of 180 peasants; and that much of this ruin is but the breaking down of a structure utterly decayed before.* “From the present data,” says Haxthausen, “it is easy to estimate the sum total to be expended in the purchase. For the whole of Russia it is about nine hundred to one thousand million rubles, of which five hundred millions are already owed by the proprietors to the state loan institutions. There remain, therefore, four hundred to five hundred millions to be actually paid.”

A second result is the uplifting and regenerating effect which liberty has had upon the whole community. The nobility are the very ones who may experience hereby the greatest benefit, and their changed condition is the very incitement which spurs them to effort. Having lost their former footing, it becomes imperative with them to secure another on which to rest their social predominance.† Hence the striving for representative

* In 1850 two fifths (44,166) of the estates, representing two thirds (7,107,184 males) of the serfs, were indebted to the banks to the amount of 425,503,061 rubles. From 1856 to 1859 alone, about 800,000 “souls” were pledged in this way. Schnitzler, Vol. I. p. 180.

† When Prince Alexis Orlof accepted the presidency of the Central Commission for the emancipation, he did so saying: “Russia will no longer be Russia. The nobility, annulled by this measure, will be obliged, in order to reinstate itself, to claim political prerogatives guaranteed by a constitution.”

and constitutional government, which was so marked a feature of their late endeavor, till the Emperor's sharp reproof to the petitioners from the Nobiliar Assemblies of Moscow and Pskoff convinced them that they were running too fast. Yet the principles which eventually lead to a constitution have been already realized in the district and provincial diets constituted by the ukase of January 21, 1864. In these diets, delegates from the landed gentry, the towns, and the villages occupy the seats. Finland has received a partial constitution of its own; and the government has introduced most important reforms. Even with our own experience in mind, it can probably be said with truth, that no nation on the earth has made such perceptible and rapid strides upward and onward as Russia during the last five years. In 1862, the budget was published for the first time. In place of the farming out of the brandy monopoly, under cover of which the greatest extortion had been carried on, a system of excise has been substituted.* Corporal punishment for women has been abolished, and for men lessened and placed more under legal restraint. The administration of justice has been put on an entirely new basis. The judges are differently appointed, and receive higher salaries. The trial by jury, the employ of advocates on both sides, of oral evidence, public procedure, and decisive verdicts in the courts, show, by the extent, the need there was of reform. A kind of habeas-corpus act, by which a person must be brought before a magistrate within twenty-four hours after arrest, has also been introduced; and in civil processes the necessary papers may be freely inspected. The character of Russian justice and of all Russian officials has been heretofore a proverb of dishonor among the nations. Smuggling was almost superseded by the ease with which fraud could be practised in the custom-house. A bribe was the prescriptive way of addressing an official. The "Tschin," — the graded system of administrative rank, — in vogue since the first Peter's day, has long been a miracle of

* Two fifths of the whole public revenue for 1862 was derived from this monopoly. The effect of the new system is cheaper and better brandy, a little more income, and more drunkenness. Previously to its introduction a temperance pledge was started among the peasants, and took so well with them as to seriously alarm the ministers of state. The pledge bound them to abstain from brandy — till brandy should be better, and tolerably cheap!

inapplicability to all existing wants, except those of the members themselves. Men would sustain enormous wrong, would look on while a drowning man sunk, rather than come — and plead guilty rather than stay — within reach of the fangs of the law. The effect of such radical changes can hardly be over-estimated ; but no sudden cure should be looked for.

Far greater freedom has been allowed the press. The preventive censorship has given way to one more nearly conformed to the French method of suffocation by warning and penalty. The effect of Nicholas's death was like touching a hidden spring. The lid of public opinion flew up, and a clatter of editorial tongues, a hubbub of journals, began in the land. It was a new sound in the ears of Russia. Many of them were soon silenced, — some losing breath naturally, others by violence. But though Alexander, since the attempt on his life, has grown fearful of the radical spirit he has conjured up, it is hardly possible that even a Russian Czar will try again to impose the silence of death on living lips. “Better from above than from below,” it is reported, was his constant exhortation to himself while he toiled to free the people from the incubus of their proprietors, and he cannot wholly forget the maxim now, when the cry for freedom is so much nearer his palace walls. Lastly, both Jews and the Protestants in the western provinces have now an official protection never before accorded their religion.

These changes indicate in some degree the new era which the present Emperor has inaugurated for his country. Peter the Great established its physical connection with the rest of Europe ; Alexander has established the moral connection. The barrier is burst from within, which for the last three centuries has kept Russia in a kind of Japanese seclusion, closed to the influence of outside civilization. Whatever be the ultimate fate of the vast conglomerate which bears her name, henceforth as a state she will live nearer the century than she ever has been able to before. Among the future results which a single generation will produce, may be almost certainly predicted the growth of a middle class, and of still another, that of country gentry. Many proprietors, weakened in means, will have to reside on their estates, and betake themselves in person to

agriculture. Education will also extend more widely, and sink more deeply. Already this work, too big to be grappled with at once, has at least been fingered. "Fifty millions who can neither read nor write" is probably a diminished statement of the truth.* Gerebtzov says (*La Civilisation en Russie*), "On an average only one in eight can read and write, — in some provinces not one in a hundred reads." Heretofore the instruction of most village children, given by the clergyman, has been confined to the church liturgy and traditions learnt orally. Nicholas sanctioned the existence of "five universities, with three hundred students each."† There are now six, with over 4,600 students, besides a considerable increase in the number of gymnasia, and district and parochial schools supported by the state. During the two years of waiting alone (1861–1863), it is said that the peasants' schools increased from 1,955 to 6,666.

One element already noticed exists in Russia which will assuredly prove a valuable auxiliary of safe and steady progress to the mass of the population, however much it must be modified by gradual civilization. The tendency to combine with his fellows seems to be an inborn propensity of the Russian peasant. The communal system of land and privilege, as described above, has almost universal sway throughout Great Russia. Where a village is devoted to manufactures rather than agriculture, industry assumes in the "artel" a similar form, — is carried on in what may be called "workingmen's associations"; and in general a whole village is devoted to a single trade, — all are curriers, all weavers, all blacksmiths, etc. It will be most interesting to watch the effect which freedom will have upon this principle; for of all the resemblances which exist between our character and position as a nation and those of Russia, this, so closely connected with democracy, is the most suggestive.‡

* The statistics of 1865 gave 794,000 pupils in 17,577 educational establishments of all kinds (Poland and Finland not included). Of these, 687,480 were in primary schools; 1 in 86 of the whole population was under instruction; in 1855, only 1 in 151. Schnitzler, Vol. II. pp. 428, 443.

† The statement of A. W. Benne, the author of two interesting articles in the *Fortnightly Review* for October 15 and November 1, 1865, on the "Upper Classes of Society in Russia." But in 1856 there were six universities, with over 4,000 students. *Statistical Journal*, Vol. XXII. p. 484.

‡ Those who wish to learn how far, in times prior to Peter's influence, the same

On the other hand, the great obstacle in the way of advance, besides the universal ignorance of all except the aristocracy, is that which springs from this ignorance,—the absence of any *public opinion* in the Western sense of that term. In Russia, the eyes of all wait upon the Czar, and the wind changes with the weathercock. That this is so is most curiously shown by the way in which the storm which rose in the interest of liberalism at Alexander's coronation, when his intentions were first proclaimed, soon veered against Poland during the late rising in that country; and more lately, since the Emperor's fright over the *attentat*, has blown straight and strong from the opposite quarter of conservatism and autocratic prerogative. It is true, that we can judge only by the expression which is allowed utterance; but the eagerness and multitude of the voices which cry just as the Ministry gives the sign, reveal how little the nerve and sinew of any real independence which may exist answers as yet to its own will. The present generation of educated men is far too official, by education and personal interest, to cut the tie which unites them to the government and makes them its facile tools. At the same time, it should be remembered that the accounts usually represent Alexander II. as a humane rather than a strong-minded monarch,—that it is less an individual's act than the force of circumstances, growing through a hundred years and reacting with enormous pressure after the restrictive reign of Nicholas, that has brought about the emancipation and its consequences. The statement is one wholly favorable to the future of the cause. If it be the public necessity that has found such utterance, and carried its demand in spite of the collective obstacles which autocracy, camarilla, nobility, corrupt administrative systems, and all the conservative elements of prestige and property could throw in the way,—if the very measures of reform and purification long called for, but almost despaired of, by the self-exiled Russian patriots, stand to-day on the law codes of the Empire,—there is surely strong reason to believe that the rule of the one or of the few in Russia is doomed, and drawing to its close.